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THE QUARTERLY
OF THE
OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

REMINISCENCES OF EXPERIENCES
ON THE OREGON TRAIL IN
1844.~II.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM FORT BRIDGER TO FORT HALL.

On August 31 we drove away late from Fort Bridger up the narrow valley of a small stream called the Muddy. An old Irishman, just arrived at Fort Bridger, came into our camp late at night as trader for Bridger. He gave such dressed skins as I had taken (ten of) for my gun, for three rifle charges of powder and lead each. That means, I gave a gun needing a twenty-five-cent repair, more valuable than any rifle for killing buffalo on the run, for thirty charges of ammunition; and I am told this is three times the cost of the skins to Mr. Bridger.

We judged the Ford and Saunders company, who followed the Walker cut-off, to be very little behind us, as this old trader came with the Ford company. Captain Shaw's company made camp just below us. This seemed

a general passway, and is steep and rocky in places. We camp near the head of the Muddy, and our course is southwest.

September 1.—We start with a rush this morning. I had just got my team onto the road when some one from Shaw's company drove up with the intention of passing me, which I was unwilling to allow. So it happened that the two companies drove much mixed. We reached the divide between Green and Bear rivers a little past noon, and stopped to lunch and rest the cattle on the summit. It was a grand outlook. I learned, however, that there was some feeling among the Shaw company boys because of the mix up. The steepest hill to drive down is soon after we passed the divide, and there was more strife to get the lead than before noon. As we came very near the levels of Bear River, one drove in between our wagons, and some words passed from me to the driver, whom I would not allow to pass me; but as we came to the wider valley Captain Morrison signed to me to drive to the left, and then I saw the wagon behind me carried some one sick, and I felt sorry I had not given the lead, and so the least dusty travel.

We camped that night in a very beautiful cove, up rather than down the Bear River, as our road lay. We had seen little sign of buffalo bones since leaving the Sweetwater, but here they were plentiful and did not look very old. They were the last I saw to know. This is one hundred and twenty miles west, as the bird flies, or two hundred miles by our meander from the last live buffaloes we saw.

September 2.—I was asked to spend the day catching trout; a few had been caught the evening before. More beautiful trout streams there could not be. At frequent intervals a good sized mill stream comes out of the mountain side under which the trout can go for safety. There

are two species—one red fleshed and another, and a smaller, with white flesh and very delicate flavor. I got of each kind the first day—one twenty-three inches long—and what a day of peaceful pleasure!

September 3.—I was again detailed to angle, but had fisherman's luck, catching only three, but among them one measuring eighteen inches, the others small.

September 4.—I was again asked by Mrs. Morrison to try for trout, but remarked in reply, "It seems to me I could do more to help along than catching a few pounds of fish." She then said, "John, I don't want to make you mad; but Wilson (Captain Morrison) thinks you drive too fast, and that the cattle will give out." She saw I understood, and was hurt; I had not thought of the consequences of overdriving, much less the consequences of losing the team by it. I went to my angling submissive and reflective.

The meander of the valley made the road hugging the foothills longer than the course of the river, and my mind not being entirely on that, night found me in advance of the wagons; but the companies were now breaking up, and I found myself at nightfall near a single family, who had taken in Daniel Clark, who had, up to our reaching South Pass, been an assistant to a Mr. Gerrish. I was made welcome to pass the night with them, during which Clark told me he and S. B. Crockett, who had also been in Gerrish's employ, were contemplating leaving the train and going forward on horseback from Fort Hall, inviting me to join them. I told him I could not do that without Captain Morrison's agreeing to it, but that if he was willing I would join them.

September 5.—This day was spent by me reflecting rather than angling, and I resolved I would not eat the bread of Captain Morrison unless I could do him service; but as he had been kind and generous to me, I could only

part with his good will and consent. But for this mental trouble the world I was in would have been one of delight. Late in the afternoon of that day I saw a fine contest between a falcon and a hare. I had started the latter near to the river. The hawk soaring near stooped with a swoop, but the hare squatted close to the ground ; the bird rose then, and the hare ran till the hawk again swooped down, but the hare again doubled down, seeming to make itself into a small, round bunch. This was repeated four or five times, and bunny got to cover of some sage brush, and the falcon went off with an angry scream.

I struck the road again in advance of my friends near Soda Springs. There was in sight, however, G. W. Bush, at whose camp table Rees and I had received the hospitalities of the Missouri rendezvous. Joining him, we went on to the Springs. Bush was a mulatto, but had means, and also a white woman for a wife, and a family of five children. Not many men of color left a slave state so well to do, and so generally respected ; but it was not in the nature of things that he should be permitted to forget his color. As we went along together, he riding a mule and I on foot, he led the conversation to this subject. He told me he should watch, when we got to Oregon, what usage was awarded to people of color, and if he could not have a free man's rights he would seek the protection of the Mexican Government in California or New Mexico. He said there were few in that train he would say as much to as he had just said to me. I told him I understood. This conversation enabled me afterwards to understand the chief reason for Col. M. T. Simmons and his kindred, and Bush and Jones determining to settle north of the Columbia. It was understood that Bush was assisting at least two of these to get to Oregon, and while they were all Americans, they would take no part in ill treating G. W. Bush on account of his color. No act of Colonel Simmons

as a legislator in 1846 was more creditable to him than getting Mr. Bush exempt from the Oregon law, intended to deter mulattoes or negroes from settling in Oregon—a law, however, happily never enforced.

September 6.—I took occasion to speak to Captain Morrison about going on in advance from Fort Hall. He could see nothing against this, if there was no danger from the Indians—and these people seemed glad, rather than otherwise, to see us. Those belonging to the region were few and scattered, and were ready to trade. Small parties were passing us going west, on the return from buffalo hunting. Our people are dividing up into smaller parties, a plan which, if safe, is better for the cattle. The grasses are thin on the ground and dry, except on damp lands, which, however, furnish but coarse sedge grass. In the most of places where the grass was thick enough for fire to run, the surface had been burned over and we travel in an odor of scorched willows. Some six or eight miles below (west) of Soda Springs we struck across a nearly level plain of volcanic rock formation. There is little soil, and there are many cracks and chasms large enough to hide a wagon and team in; the road winding about to avoid the cracks.

September 8.—We reached the first crossing of the Portneuf branch of the Snake River.

September 9.—We camped against foothills which seemed an outreaching spur of the Rocky Mountains.

September 10.—Daniel Clark and I started on in advance to reach Fort Hall, my purpose being to trade off my gun for a horse, but we failed to reach the post. We made camp in a brush patch, with songs for supper. Clark staked his horse with a long buffalo hide rope; but we found, after ceasing our songs, that something was making the horse restless, which continued until past midnight, after which we got a little sleep. But the

dawn showed us the rope cut within six feet of where we lay in the brush, and the horse gone. We accordingly, carrying the saddle and Clark's blanket, took the horse's trail, and found the horse quietly feeding about three quarters of a mile from where he left us, with about seven feet of the rope attached to his neck. The wolves had taken twenty-five to thirty feet of rope for their supper. There seemed no other kind of wild life but wolves.

Soon after Clark got his horse saddled and we were on the road toward the fort again, we were overtaken by a native gentleman—defining that word as one who voluntarily assists another without hope of reward: on the Christian principle of doing to a stranger as he would wish the stranger to treat himself.

We were beginning to feel the sun's heat, when we were overtaken by a single Indian, well mounted, with a loose horse following him. He looked at Clark's excellent mount, and then at me laboriously walking among the brush to avoid the loose, sandy road; then asked, by signs, if I would ride, and was answered affirmatively. He unloosed his hair rope from his saddle and dashed at the loose animal, catching him at the first throw; made a bridle of the rope by two half hitches on the lower jaw, took the saddle blanket from under his saddle for me to ride on, and signed to Clark he was in haste and would leave me at the fort. Then we set off in a gallop. I had a heavy buffalo gun carrying, and he soon perceived that riding at such speed without stirrups would be punishment to me. He therefore stopped again, put his saddle onto my horse and took the substitute himself, and away we dashed again. A mile perhaps from the fort our path led across a small stream. Here he stopped, dismounted and washed, took out a small pocket comb and glass, and thus prepared for company. Half a mile more brought us to the camp I suppose he had come to visit at, and we

alighted, and he pointed out the location of the fort. I signed that I would wait for my friend before going on, and gave him my thanks; so we parted, he entering the Indian camp a few yards away. As I sat there with my face towards the road we had come, a young girl came to me bringing the new lid of a gallon tin pail heaped with luscious, ripe blackberries. It was a great treat to me. I felt mean at the idea of offering compensation, but ventured to present her a few fishhooks as a means of thanks, and am sure I noted a flash of the eyes denoting pleasure.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GATEWAY TO OREGON—SIX HUNDRED MILES OF HUNGRY LAND.

Such was the treatment received from the first Oregon Indians seen by the writer.

Fort Hall had been built as a trading post, and the American flag unfurled over it first by N. J. Wyeth in 1834. But Wyeth had been crushed out by competition with the Hudson's Bay Company, and was compelled to sell after a few years of desperate struggle, and the post was now in control of Alexander Grant as chief trader for that company. It was at this date the trade center of a hungry land. Its supplies of breadstuffs came from Western Oregon, six hundred miles west, and its meats from the buffalo country about as far east. It was in the natural passway of native tribes to and from the hunting grounds, and west of it had been the land of privation from prior to its first traversing by white men in 1811.

Clark arriving soon after I had disposed of the luscious treat of berries, we went together to the fort. As

in the most of stockades built for trade purposes, there was one small common room used by trade transients. Mr. Grant came into this shortly after we arrived, and seemingly concluded at a glance that we were not worth much commercially, as without speaking to either of us, he returned to his quarters before I could state my business. Being both bashful and proud, we told no one of our hunger, but went out some two miles to the Portneuf, hoping to kill some ducks and find better grass for Clark's horse than was to be had near the fort. But ducks were scarce and wild and we lay down supperless again. But a lucky shot floated within range of our camp fire next morning. At the report of the gun Clark wheeled like a retriever and bounded into the pool waist deep; rushed back to the fire and held the duck in the blaze by its feet, rapidly changing hands, till the feathers came off in scorched masses, bringing much of the skin, and roughly pulling the bird apart, gave part of it to me. The cooking of that duck was never grumbled at.

We then made our way back to the fort, arriving just as the Owens Brothers, and James Marshall, who later discovered gold in California, drove up to the fort gate. Henry Owens, with whom Marshall went subsequently to California to get cattle to graze the Willamette Valley, was driving that day, and we told him we had eaten nothing but a raw duck in three days. "Well, boys," said big Henry, "there's a few pones of cold bread, and I can cut you some trim side bacon; that's the best I can do here and now." With thanks, we got a good square meal. They drove out to the Portneuf for grass; but their arrival had waked the trade habit of Grant, and I then had opportunity to show him the gun I proposed to give for a saddle horse. Grant was, I think, a coarser man than Bridger, but carried more outside polish of manner. He gave me fair treatment in trade,

however, furnishing a strong saddle horse for my gun, and finding I could get the bullet moulds for it, gave me an Indian saddle for that. I had just completed my trade when other members of the Saunders party drove up, ours closely following. What I observed here in the next few minutes greatly surprised me.

As our train drove up to the gate of the stockade more people came out from the establishment than I supposed could be housed there. I had been inside twice and had seen but a couple of rough mountain men, one of whom told me he was a hatter by trade and pursued his calling there from foundation principles, catching his own fur-bearing animals or using the fine hair of the wolf. Among the many others I had not yet seen was Pegleg Smith, a man widely known as one of the most reckless of his class—the Rocky-mountain men. He was now neatly dressed in navy blue, and would have been judged a steamboat captain in Saint Louis. Having heard of him from my friend Clark, who had seen him while visiting relatives in Missouri, I was wondering over his neat appearance, when a Catholic priest came out, and Mr. Smith passed before him, lifting his hat and receiving a few low spoken words which I supposed was such a blessing as would be given on a feast day in the City of Mexico.

Reverend Father Cave, a Baptist minister, was asking Captain Grant if the land around the fort would not respond to cultivation with crops. Mr. Grant said he could not tell; it had not been tried, to his knowledge. Father Cave declared his conviction that with irrigation it would yield rich harvests. He then asked whether we could get to the Columbia River with wagons. Grant's reply was, in substance: "Mr. Cave, it's no use my answering your question. It's just about a year since a lot of people came here just as you have done and asked me the

same question. I told them 'No; that we found it very difficult to pass the narrow trails with our pack ponies.' They went on, just as you will do: just as if I had not spoken a word, and the next I heard of them they were at Fort Walla Walla. You —— Yankees will do anything you like.' Then Father Cave seeing Mr. Grant was becoming annoyed led the way out to the Portneuf, where the coarse sedge grass was plentiful and the ground damp and easeful for the cattle. Mr. Grant had handed out to Captains Morrison and Shaw a letter written by P. H. Burnett of the immigration of 1843, to the effect that if for any cause there was likely to be suffering before the families could reach the Willamette and we would let it be then known, relief would be sent. Both Morrison and Shaw had heard Burnett speak on Oregon in Missouri. Pegleg Smith advised against so small a number as three attempting to reach the Willamette Valley in advance of the wagons, and Clark weakened for awhile, but Crockett and I kept to our intent, and he joined us. So we set off on our new venture across "Six Hundred Miles of Hungrie Land"—

"Through the land of savage foes
See the long procession goes
Till it camps by the Columbia of the West;
Where the mountains block the stream,
And the cascades flash and gleam,
And the sun sinks to his distant ocean rest.

"Tramp, tramp, tramp, the trains keep marching;
At length the deadly plains are passed;
But there's still the river trail
And the Cascade Range to scale;—
Then the fair Willamette homes are reached at last."

NOTE.—It was generally understood among immigrants of 1844 that between Fort Hall and Fort Vancouver there was danger of suffering from lack of food. Whitman Station, west of the Blue Mountains, was the only chance of relief, and was commonly spoken of as such. The Indians were not counted on for furnishing supplies, and by mountain men were reported as sometimes in great straits, being reduced to cannibal practices. They were not at this time thought of as dangerous, but in a few years they became so, and increasingly until in 1860. The most horrible massacre that occurred on the Oregon Trail took place near Salmon Falls. Thieving of live stock and clothing became more and more common also.

On the morning of September 16 we three young men left our friends on the banks of the Portneuf. Our leaders sent no letters by us, but we had reason to believe that some of the families were already short of food. We started with fifteen pounds of buffalo pemmican, purchased from a Kanaka servant of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Hall. Mr. G. W. Bush, always watchful, followed us out from the wagon and said, "Boys, you are going through a hard country. You have guns and ammunition. Take my advice: anything you see as big as a blackbird, kill it and eat it." We got three out of a covey of sage grouse that day, and that was the last we saw of that kind of game.

Next morning, as we passed Colonel Ford's train, three young men came out and joined us. One of them was on foot, and they had no provisions. Our store was exhausted, when at the crossing of Goose Creek we met a guide of the Hudson's Bay Company and a lay brother of the Catholic Church, to guide the priest we had seen at Fort Hall to the Missoula country. We mentioned our condition as to food supply, and asked the chances to purchase of Indians ahead. The leader replied, "It is not good, gentlemen, this side of Salmon Falls. I have a dozen salmon skins, however; and as we will reach Fort Hall to-morrow night, we'll make six do us; I will give you half." He would not hear of pay. "No, gentlemen; good-bye, and better luck to you."

Before we got to Salmon Falls, however, we were hailed by a middle-aged Indian, who held up a large salmon to show his meaning. We purchased the fresh fish and a few dried skins, and some roe dried in the smoke of the camp fire. We found fishhooks good small change for the purchase of fish—much better than money would have been. West of the American Falls the river bed (Snake) falls rapidly below the plain on the south

side. At one point the fire had been got to run in the thin grass and sagebrush, and the Indians were harvesting large black crickets, grasshoppers, and small black lizards. We met a small party of Indian families going eastward, seemingly on a hunting expedition. They had young deer heads prepared to use as decoys, and bows and arrows as arms. They looked poor and inferior as compared with some who passed us near Fort Bridger, returning from buffalo hunting. One party came to us with a small bay horse for sale, and Mr. Ramsay bought it and mounted Mr. Murray, who was on foot. Near Salmon Falls we came upon a young man utterly nude; he was lying against a steep sand bank apparently enjoying a very hot sun bath. He was a finely formed young animal as he stood up with glistening skin, smiling an apology for having left his clothes at home, apparently. The canyon was so deep that the dome-like wickiups below looked like meadow mouse nests rather than human habitations.

Soon after leaving the young man standing in the road looking after us, we descended a very steep and rough trail to the lower part of Salmon Falls, and found ourselves near three of those nest-like houses. We could see people busy along the river on both sides above us, but found only one very old woman housekeeper. She quickly understood that we wanted food, and led us into the lodge. A large unevenly molded earthenware pot stood near some live coals of burning sagebrush. She filled for each of us bowls of fish soup, which our hunger made taste good to us. The bowls, woven of plaited grass, seemed to be made soup proof by a fishskin glue. The pot itself took most of my attention, as it seemed to have been made of common brick clay, but had no crack or flaw. It was beyond doubt of Indian manufacture. We

purchased some salmon roe and skins, and left the old lady well pleased with our payment of fishhooks.

Near this point we overtook Major Thorp's company, and camped near by it. One member of this company claimed the horse Mr. Ramsay had bought as having been stolen from him by Indians. One of the party named Durben, not the owner or claimant, talked biggest about taking the horse from us. We truthfully put in the plea of honest purchase in protest. Mr. Durben made a second visit to our camp after we had demurred to giving the horse up, and talked very big about the foolkiller of their company coming and taking in the horse, and some of us if necessary. He was asked to give us fair warning if that was resolved upon—supposing that he was just talking. Long years afterwards the writer learned from William M. Case that Durben's proposition had been seriously discussed in their company, and that he (Durben) was himself the foolkiller, who later lost his life in California by meeting a bigger fool than himself.

We crossed the Snake River at the wagon ford below Salmon Falls, and were out of provisions again when we came to where the Boise River debouches from the hills to the plain. The Bannock Indians had a great fishery here, keeping a large drying rack constantly clothed with salmon drying on the skin. When cured these were put up in bales of about eighty pounds weight each, for storing for winter use, or for barter. They used a weir system of brush to catch the fish. The Bannocks were very friendly, and took so much pains to guide us to where we would get good grass for our horses that some of the boys became suspicious. The man who took this pains stayed with us all night, and parted from us next morning with every appearance of honest kindness. He showed us by signs that the fine horse Clark had got at Bridger in exchange for a mule had been injured chasing buffalo by

one of his friends. Leaving this fishery with a good supply, we were shortly overtaken by another party of the same tribe, as we supposed. Some of the young fellows drove their horses by us, yelling in a spirit of mischievous fun. The women came up sedately, leading pack horses. They let us know that they had been out gathering fruit by showing us cakes of what I judged to be choke cherries and service berries beaten together and dried in cakes of about four inches across and three quarters of an inch thick. The fishhooks were again successful as a medium of exchange. We passed portions of Boise River that day as rich with salmon, as a food supply, as the plains of the Platte had been with buffalo beef.

Near Fort Boise a single young Indian signed for us to stop and go with him into the timber ; and led the way to a camp fire under cottonwood trees. He moved away the fire and the live coals, then began to carefully remove the sandy soil, uncovering a fair-sized salmon baked in the hot sand. Putting this carefully aside, he dug down further and unearthed a beaver skin, which he wished to sell. While we tried to convey to him by signs that we did not wish to buy the skin, his wife and a chubby little boy came timidly from the river. We made Fort Boise that evening, and mustered among us enough money to purchase twenty pounds of Oregon flour. The trader in charge refused to sell a little dried elk meat. It was "for the master," he said. We forded the Snake at the emigrant crossing below the little adobe trading post. A duck killed at Willow Springs the fourth morning from Fort Hall was our only game until this evening. Mr. Crockett killed a little cottontail rabbit.

The road so far from Fort Hall had not been very bad, and being generally down hill we made good travel. On entering Burnt-river Canyon, however, it meandered a good deal, and often followed the bed of the stream to

avoid the labor of cutting through the dense thicket. It was also steep climbing to get out at the head of the canyon. In doing so we overtook part of Woodcock's company, who left us the morning after our military organization. They had done better than we, both in expedition of movement and in keeping up their food supply. From Mr. Loomis we purchased a little buffalo pemmican—ten pounds I think. This was reduced to a very little by our supper and breakfast at Lone Pine camp on the bank of Powder River; but some wretch had cut the noble landmark, the pine tree, down. At noon we gave our horses an hour to graze on the top of the hill overlooking Grand Ronde Valley. We had not been in the habit of eating a midday lunch, and the little we had would not go far in abating our hunger. We took a vote on the proposition to eat it then and trust to Providence, and it carried five to one; after which we were out of food for the third time since leaving Fort Hall.

Getting our horses we led them down the exceedingly steep and rough trail. About halfway down this long hill we passed two prairie chickens which lit on the limb of one of two fir trees, the first of this timber we saw. A rifle shot got one of the birds. At the foot of the hill the trail was close against ash timber and brush, and here we found a family of pheasants—another shot got another bird. But we had not advanced more than half a mile till we were hailed by a party of Oregon men camped a little off the trail. They invited us to stop and camp with them. It proved to be James Waters, William C. Dement, and —. Rice, thus far out to meet the immigration, Mr. Waters expecting to meet his family, and we were compelled to give him the disappointing information that his family was not on the way. We dressed our game and placed it on to cook. Our

Oregon friends gave us rice and tea and sugar, and things looked generally pleasant as the result of our trust in Providence. To complete our satisfaction a cavalcade of Indian women now came along with horses loaded with camas roots. We purchased some fresh roots to boil with our game; but the squaws knowing better than we how to use camas, brought out some cakes of camas bread they had left over from their lunch. These cakes were eight to ten inches broad and one and a quarter thick, of brown color, and texture like new cheese, but more glutinous, with a sweet and agreeable taste; undoubtedly a very nutritious food. We bought all the women had, fishhooks being our money.

Next morning a very dense fog lay over Grand Ronde. We took the trail, however, and just as we got to where we started into the Blue Mountains the fog lifted and we found a number of Indians, all of whom were men, except one exceedingly handsome girl. She was well dressed in buckskin, highly ornamented, and mounted on a proud and beautiful horse. A fine man, past middle age, was her company—father and daughter they appeared. They took no part in the trading, which indeed seemed more pretense than business. A keen eyed, powerful man would have a quart or two of pease; another as much corn; the next a few potatoes; and over each sample would be five times the bargaining we had with the women the evening before. We took the mountain trail, which was as bad as Mr. Grant's description, and were soon overtaken by two of the Indians, who had followed to trade me a better horse and get the pistol—which I had fired in compliment to the Indian girl—to boot. They got their bargain, and I got much the worse horse.

We camped that night with the most advanced section of Woodcock's company, in a deep valley in the Blue Mountains. The Cayuse chief, Sticcus, and his

family are with these first teams of 1844 to cross these mountains. The family conducted worship by singing and prayer in the evening and morning. The singing sounded very sweet in the valley, but it gave me a feeling akin to shame to note that a supposed wild man was the only one who formally recognized God in his daily life.

Sticcus, as the sedate old character is called by people generally, leads the way over the road that he guided those who led the trains of 1843, with such men as the Applegates, Waldos, and Nesmith, the last next to him with an axe to cut out obstructive growth an ox wagon could not pass. By taking Dr. Whitman's advice and guidance to Grand Ronde, and the guidance of Sticcus across the Blue Mountains, this way was indicated and traveled in 1843, and though rough, was much more easily traveled in 1844. All honor to Dr. Whitman and his friend and proselyte Sticcus. The service the former rendered by his advice and help to get the immigration of 1843 to Walla Walla, and the service his Indian friend aided him in, well entitle both to the remembrance of Oregonians.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON TO THE COLUMBIA.

October 10.—About 2 o'clock P. M. we emerged from the timber on the west slope of the Blue Mountains. I am this day twenty-two years of age. The sight from this mountain top is one to be remembered while life lasts. It affects me as did my first sight of the ocean, or again, my first sight of the seeming boundless treeless plains before we saw the Platte River. From this point north and south there are no bounds in sight. Looking across this grand valley westward the dark blue

line of the Cascade Range of Mountains appears a forest-clad and impassable wall, out of which arise two immense white cones called, as I subsequently learned, Mount Hood and Mount Adams. Looking down the foot of the mountains we see a line of what appears brushwood, in which the glisten of water can be seen in spots.

For more than two miles we descend, sometimes in a deeply worn horse trail and sometimes in sight of the dim wagon tracks made the previous year. As soon as we reach the brush and tree growth on the bank of the Umatilla River we meet Cayuse Indians. We are invited to stop by a sign and the words "Swap Six" from a young Indian who has about a peck of potatoes in a sack in front of him on horseback. He conveys to us by a sign that he wishes a shirt in exchange for his potatoes. We need the potatoes, as we are utterly without material for supper. After consultation we find one of our party has yet a spare shirt, and the trade is soon effected with mutual satisfaction apparently. The young man goes toward the brush, and out of the thicket came two young squaws, to whom the purchase is shown. One of them holds the garment up to the light and perceives that it has been worn, and she points to its being thinner at the shoulder points. The women, or girls, both begin to laugh at him, and this ends in his coming back to us for a return of his potatoes. But we think he has got his dry goods very cheap, and being hungry easily conclude as it takes two parties to make a trade it takes two to break one. The Indian suddenly rides against the one who has charge of our purchase and throws it to the ground, and begins to gather up his lasso as if to use that. One of our party, keeping his gun in one hand, got to the ground, and putting the little loosely filled sack onto the horn of his saddle vaulted into his seat and turned the muzzle of his gun towards

the brave, who was swinging his lasso apparently for a throw. Four of the six of us had guns, and the brave quieted down and went away. We moved on a couple of miles and made camp, keeping a sharp lookout over our horses. This incident shows what we soon learned was a common trait of Indian trading.

October 11.—We reached the Columbia at the mouth of the Umatilla, and there met Gen. M. M. McCarver. We met one Indian on this day's travel, from whom we got a large fresh salmon in exchange for fishhooks. Though this man was ordinary in appearance, he carried with him a long and finely made double-pointed fish spear with which he had doubtless killed the salmon he had. His excellent seat on horseback, and the ease with which he carried his long spear, made an interesting figure.

But more interesting still was General McCarver. He, like James Waters, had come expecting to meet his family, but, learning they were not on the way, he returned with us to Western Oregon, turning over to us provisions he had brought for his family under our agreement to pay him in labor in taking care of his harvest, which he had left exposed to the chances of the weather. This was a pleasant arrangement for us, the pleasure being still increased by Mr. McCarver's company, for besides being an intelligent gentleman he was at this time Speaker of the Legislature of the Provisional Government of Oregon, so that through his conversation we learned much of men and measures of the Oregon government.

October 12.—We traveled rapidly, generally following the shore line of the Columbia River. We overtook an Indian traveling with his family, and under his proposition one of our party traded horses, leaving him apparently well satisfied. He soon overtook us, however, and insisted so persistently in ruing his bargain that he was

allowed to swap back. The wind swept cold and bleak up the river bed. We noted for the first time the Indian death wail.

October 13.—We crossed the John Day River near its mouth ; the water was low and the bed so rocky that we could have almost crossed dry shod.

October 14.—We crossed the Des Chutes River at a dangerous ford, near its entrance into the Columbia. We had scattered during the day's travel so that only Crockett, Clark, and myself were together when we reached the ford, where an Indian offered to guide us over for a shirt. We had none to spare, so Crockett took the stream, while Clark watched the crossing. Then Clark went over, and I watched. Crockett was out of sight among some sand hills before Clark was over ; then I followed. The care thus observed in crossing separated us two hundred and fifty to three hundred yards. As I entered the sand hills, into which both of my companions had passed, I was met on the trail by an old and small man who made the common salute of "Swap salmon, Six?" offering his hand in great seeming friendliness, trying to make me understand. Soon another, and then several others came, each offering his hand to shake. Last came one on horseback, and, on my offering to shake hands, drew back and scowled. I remarked in English, "Oh, I don't care if you don't wish to be friendly." He then, with a grin meant to be playful, signed that he would look at my gun, and took hold of the barrel near the muzzle in his right hand, with a twisting grip. I had my hand on the lock and trigger, and moved so the muzzle was at his breast. Instantly he let go as though the gun was hot. I cast my glance over my left shoulder in time to see an open hand withdrawn from being ready to close over on my horse rope. I then let out a yell which arrested Crockett and Clark,

the former now much out of rifle shot. I counted and found seventeen Indians scattering just like so many wolves driven from their prey. I had just missed being robbed and stripped by the length of time it took to close my hands on my gun. It is hard to say now whether the end would have been a white man robbed or an Indian shot in the breast in the next half second, as the gun was an old flintlock and often missed fire. I was very angry and talked very bad English as long as any of the cowardly wretches were in sight. That evening we met an Indian from the mission at The Dalles who spoke English plainly.

October 15.—We got to The Dalles and went into camp near the mission. We found it was Sunday, and we had camped right against the log building in which service was held in preaching to the Indians. We felt like trespassers, and had no right to complain of cold treatment, as our disregard of the Sabbath was an added obstacle to the objects of the missionaries.

At The Dalles our party divided: Crockett, Ferguson, and myself taking the horses across the Cascades *via* the trail the missionaries had used to bring cattle from the Willamette—the only one used until S. K. Barlow and others forced their way through on the south side of Mount Hood in 1845–46. The original trail passed close to the mountain on its north side. We camped one night in the dense timber without grass for our horses, and reached Oregon City on the evening of October 18, in three days from The Dalles; and it began to rain that night.

October 19.—We rode in a pouring warm rain from Oregon City to McCarver's farm on the Tualatin Plains, and found our friends had beaten us one day. There were five of them who made the trip from The Dalles down the Columbia in one Chinook canoe. These were General

McCarver and James Holman, of 1843 immigration, and Ramsay, Murray, and Daniel Clark, of 1844. The passage of the cascades delayed them only the difference between floating and walking the three miles portage, as Clark, with the rashness which was a strong trait in his character, shot the canoe down that very dangerous piece of river alone. Neither McCarver nor Holman, who knew the rapids and the chances taken, would run the risks and advised our three comrades against doing so.

Clark was by nature a man of great courage, and had left the position of ferryman on Grand River, Missouri, to come to Oregon. We renewed our bedfellowship on my arrival at the McCarver Farm, and Clark related with glee and pride his success in shooting the cascades. He told me also of his interview with a British ship captain as his party passed Vancouver. As in both incidents he showed the type of his class, age, and motive, I insert the latter here with my belief that he was much surprised when, thirty years later, I detailed the account to an audience of Oregon pioneers, and he had forgotten ever having told it to me: On arrival at Vancouver, the canoe party found a ship just arrived from London with the usual annual cargo of goods for the Hudson's Bay Company's Pacific Coast trade. Clark had never before seen a seagoing vessel to remember it, and learned it would not be deemed intrusive to go on board merely to see it. While waiting General McCarver's return from the fort, whither he had gone probably to give Doctor McLoughlin the information he had got from us of the number of immigrants approaching, and to ask in behalf of Clark, Crockett, and myself for the use of a bateau boat in which to assist our friends from The Dalles to the Willamette when they should arrive at the former point. Clark used his leisure by going on the ship alone, and making an inspection from stem to stern. He found himself at last face to face with the

captain, who, engaged with his log, or ship's accounts, looked up in surprise at the intruder, and addressed him in words to this effect: "Young man, who are you; and what do you want here?" Clark, somewhat flushed, answered, "Sir, I am an immigrant just come down the river: I do not wish to intrude, but I wanted to see the ship, as I never saw one before to recollect." The captain examined his visitor a few moments in silence, and then said, "Where do you come from and why do you come here?" He was answered instantly, "We come from Missouri, across the Rocky Mountains; we've come to settle in Oregon and rule this country." The captain took another silent stare, and then replied, "Well, young man, I have sailed in every quarter of the globe, and have seen the most of the peoples upon it; but a more uncouth, and, at the same time, bolder set of men than you Americans I have never seen."

October 20.—The six of us went to work in the timber near the McCarver homestead to get out material and build a rough barn in which to stack the wheat crop yet in the field. By the glancing of an ax from a barked tree to be used for roofing, I was cut to the bone of my left leg. Mr. Ramsay fainted at the sight of the wound. It was bound up, however, with some cotton rags, and he revived in time to help vote me into the office of cook for a working party of eight to ten. General McCarver had ample provision of flour, salt, and smoked salmon and bacon and garden stuff. It was not my skill as *chef* which prevented any waste of cold victuals during the ten days of the season of my service. It was the effect of a short supply of inferior food on the last half of the journey, and probably the change of air also, which caused the appetite to wait an opportunity for months after our arrival in Oregon. Yet half famished, as we

were, between Fort Hall and Western Oregon, never have I felt such delight in being alive.

Thus paying our obligation to General McCarver and also by getting his grain crop under cover, Clark, Crockett, and myself went into the woods between Oregon City and Tualatin Plains, as assistants of a small contractor, and built five claim-holding log cabins in six days. We had no team help of any kind. The law required sixteen-foot square, and the eaves of the roof six feet from the ground. This job done, our boss, known as Little Osbourn, took me to the residence of Hon. Peter H. Burnett, the most influential leader of the immigration from Missouri of those leaving that state in 1843 and 1844, to whom I was introduced as one who was willing to take a job of making rails. In a few minutes we agreed upon the terms on which I should make Mr. Burnett one thousand and five hundred cedar rails some two and a half miles from his residence. In a few minutes more Mr. Burnett was plying me with questions in order to learn how near the climates of England and Western Oregon were like each other. Crockett joined me in making the rails. It rained a warm, fine fall almost every hour of daylight, but we did not stop work. We split cedar slabs and made a roof to shelter us while sleeping, and we cooked and ate our three meals daily. We had finished our job on the second of December, when we learned some of the most forward immigrants had arrived at Linnton, and that Mr. McCarver, Burnett's partner in projecting that town, had a letter from Doctor McLoughlin, saying that the three young men who had applied by him for a boat in which to help their friends from The Dalles would find one tied up at Linnton waiting their use.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RELIEF EXPEDITION UP THE COLUMBIA.

Sunday, December 3, we left Mr. H. Buxton's, (McCarver's lodging,) on Tualatin Plains, at 1 o'clock P. M. and walked to Linnton by the recently opened wagon road. We found already there Mr. Jacob Hoover of Gilliam's train. Maj. John Tharp, leader of the train that came up the north side of the Platte, and Hoover, had brought his family down in the boat we were to get. Mr. Hoover had been elected colonel on the resignation of M. T. Simmons, when Gilliam's hunting mania disrupted our organization, and was of better stuff for a leader than either Gilliam or Simmons for such a journey. We accepted Colonel Hoover's invitation to a second dinner, having covered fourteen miles of rough mountain road from Buxton's. At the dinner table the chief dish was a fine wild swan.

Mr. Hoover, in telling us of our friends so far as he knew, related an incident of Mr. Gilliam's talk which was in its origin mere fun to the family, but grew to be serious in three years from that date. Doctor McLoughlin acted on a very common business policy. While ready to help the poorest of those in need, he took pains to conciliate persons of supposed influence. In accordance with this policy a boat and presents of both food and clothing, as the story went, met General Gilliam at The Dalles. In pure fun some of his family told him those presents and the boat were sent to "buy him up" for the British interest in advance. Gilliam, who was as near devoid of humor as a man could be, replied that he "was quite willing to live in peace and good neighborhood with the Hudson's Bay Company as long as they respected his rights, but if they went to cutting any *rustics* with him, he should have no hesitation in

knocking their stockade down about their ears.' It is quite likely this talk, perhaps reiterated by Gilliam at the news of the Whitman massacre, occasioned an exchange of letters on the subject of that threat between chief factor James Douglas and Governor George Abernethy. We enjoyed the story for the fun in it, and took boat after our swan dinner and rowed to Vancouver, ten miles, that evening.

We got there about 9 o'clock P. M. and had trouble to get entrance and an opportunity to speak with Mr. Douglas, Doctor McLoughlin being absent at Oregon City. Mr. Douglas, after learning our business and reasons for stopping at the fort, sent us outside the stockade to lodge, and a good supper after us. We learned next morning that we had lodged in a cot, or cabin, shared by a lowland Scotch blacksmith, who worked entirely on axes for the Indian trade, and an Orkney Islander, whose pay was £17, or short \$85 a year. He was shepherd of the flocks kept to supply the Vancouver tables. The smith's wages were five shillings per diem. These both were contracted at common fare, which might be salt salmon and potatoes, to be cooked by the laborers. We learned also that the wages of Sandwich Islanders, of whom the Hudson's Bay Company had a considerable number, were \$5.00 per month, and salmon and potatoes furnished for food; that is, as closely as could be estimated, \$65 per annum for common laborers.

December 4.—We entered Fort Vancouver, as the gate was opened about 9 o'clock A. M. Doctor McLoughlin was on the porch, or stoop, of the residence building, and beckoned us to him. He asked if we were the young men who had applied for a boat to assist our friends down the river. We replied we were. He said: "Young men, young men; I advise you, if you can, take your boat above the cascades and bring all the people down

to the cascades,—not your own friends only,—and I'll see ; I'll see they are all brought from there."

We assented to his suggestion, and then showed him some small orders we had from General McCarver, for which we desired food supplies for our trip. These he examined, and said : "Under our rules we are not selling goods just now ; we are taking stock for the year. But you are, I think, going on an errand of mercy and shall have what you need." He then called a servant and told him to show us to Mr. Graham's office, and bidding us good morning, turned toward his residence a few steps, but suddenly turned again and said : "Young men, young men ; perhaps you would like to communicate with your friends in the East. If so, there is opportunity ; an express will leave the fort to-day at 2 o'clock to our ship at the mouth of the river, which gives you an opportunity you may not have again for six months or more."

We thanked him, but said we could not write as we had no means of doing so with us. He began to beckon another servant, to whom he said : "Go to Mr. Graham and ask him to send by you paper, pens, and ink to the strangers' room." And then turning to us said (pointing to an open door across the northeast angle of the area from his residence) : "Go in there, young men, and write your letters first ; you can get your goods afterwards. But be in that room soon after the bell rings. Good day."

Thanking him again for the third time, we entered bachelors' hall, understanding the mention of the bell ringing was an invitation to dinner. The servant with the stationery guided us into the room, in which I labored nearly two hours on a brief letter telling my parents of my arrival in Oregon. I may say here that thus writing on December 4, 1844, I received my father's reply at

Point Adams on July 15, 1847. It was one of the first parcels of letters brought overland to Oregon from Saint Louis, Missouri, carried by J. M. Shiveley of Astoria.

After an excellent English dinner of roast beef and vegetables, we waited on Mr. Graham, clerk of the "shop." He asked if there were only three going to take a bateau up to the cascades, and on being answered affirmatively, said it was deemed fair work for seven of their Canadian boatmen—six at the oars and a captain to steer. It was deemed a three days' job to reach the upper or "short portage," one third of a mile carry; the rapids extended three miles, being the long portage. We took the boat up stream after 2 o'clock P. M. about three miles.

December 5.—By persistent labor we gained about sixteen miles, which enabled us to camp in one of the cave-like recesses on the east side of the Cape Horn precipice. The wind was hardly perceptible down stream as night closed about us.

December 6.—As day broke we could see a slight ripple on the river, as though the wind was chinook up the river, though it did not touch our camp. While one got breakfast two stepped the mast, which lay in the bottom of the boat with sail attached, and, eating hurriedly, we pulled out into the river from behind the cape. It was chinook wind, and freshened as the day advanced, covering the river with whitecaps and sending us forward faster than any six Canadian oarsmen could have done. At one point there is a deep notch in the top of the mountain on the south side, through which the southwest wind dipped to the surface of the river, making a chopped sea of it. Several times within a few minutes our sail filled backwards, and the boat made all kinds of ugly motions, as if to throw us out. By active use of the

oars we got above this cross current of wind and again steadily advanced.

The wind increased so that we were at the foot of the rapids at the lower portage about 2 o'clock P. M. For more than twenty miles the snow line on the mountain sides seemed to descend slowly towards the river till at this point it seemed there was but a few hundred feet in which the snow turned into rain. Thinly clad in our much-worn clothing, we were trembling with cold, and hardly able to walk on beaching the boat at the foot of the rapids.

The question now to be decided was how to pull that large boat up the shore, the usual course with even a light canoe. But the wind seemed to increase in power, and thus suggested trying the sail. Clark was skillful in steering with an oar, and it did not take us long in deciding to try it. Then for more than two hours we had an experience rarely if ever had in passing up those rapids before the day of steam navigation on the Columbia River. Sometimes the current would beat the wind in force, and we would be slowly carried downwards towards black rocks cutting the surface of the river like a knife, the current being truly terrific. Again we hung just above certain destruction had the wind suddenly failed, and disaster would have been almost certain any time had the steersman attempted to turn or go across current. However, the strength of the wind prevailed, and we reached the upper portage before nightfall.

December 7.—We were visited, while eating breakfast, by two members of the crew of another boat, which had been plying between the cascades and The Dalles. They proposed to assist us up with our boat, cordeling her around and up the rapids, and thus spare us the help of two Indians as rowers, and make it a joint business. This accorded with Doctor McLoughlin's advice, and

added a prospect of some compensation for our time, which had not been in our original plan. We agreed to stick together, we three leaving to the other party their proportion of the income ; and the two returned to their camp for ropes and help, soon returning, however, with ropes hardly deemed safe. The method now to be pursued was cordeling, the boat being simply towed by hand along the shore against the current, or from little bight to bight, where the eddies and shore water were not so violent, and strong ropes were essential.

In order to strengthen the ones procured, we cut and twisted hazel withes to add strength, but the added weight of our cable gave greatly added care to keep from running into the shore. This was my charge, as I was placed in the boat to fend her off the rocks. However, there was only a gallon can of sugar or syrup, and myself, to be damaged by water—if we avoided staving or wrecking the boat. The eight men who had hold of the cord succeeded in pulling me up, reaching the calm water of the landing above the cascades, and only a barrel or so of water shipped, and no damage done. Here I met Captain Morrison's family and many others of his company. He himself, however, was among the mountains, trying to recover the cattle, which had been caught and scattered by a snowstorm. The people were all in dire straits for food, waiting for boats to take them below, and we should have given a little relief had we not concluded Doctor McLoughlin's plan, and our promise, was the best course to pursue to secure the relief of all in the shortest possible time. I took the earliest possible opportunity to learn Mrs. Morrison's situation. She said she had traded the last and best dress she had, except the one she had on, the evening before for about a peck of potatoes. They would have eaten them all for supper, but had kept a few for breakfast. They now had not a single thing to eat in

camp, and Mr. George Waunch, who had joined them, was out trying to kill ducks. He, Mr. Rees, herself, and six children in the situation described.

I went immediately to my partners and told them I should have to have my share of provisions we had purchased. They protested, asking if I was going to back out of an arrangement so recently made. I replied "No;" but I was bound by a promise made in Missouri, which they knew was the cause of my being with them. I told them the condition I found Captain Morrison's family in, and that I would go with them and stay with them if I could be permitted to turn my share of the provisions we had to Mrs. Morrison's use. They consented. Mrs. Morrison was supplied, and within half an hour the two boats' crews, of four oarsmen each, started for The Dalles.

I can not well leave the condition of other families met here without some observation. It may be judged of somewhat by the fact that I learned subsequently that Mrs. Morrison divided the little provisions I turned over to her among her more needy neighbors. I saw one man, the father of four children, lying on his back upon a rock, taking the rain in his face, seemingly having given up all thought of manly struggle.

December 8.—We left the rain and clouds behind us, and blue sky, bright sunshine, and the sight of grassy mountains greet us as we ascend towards The Dalles.

December 9.—In passing the mouth of a stream now called Hood River, we found a party of men camped on a sand bar. We landed and learned that they had been with Captain Morrison extricating the cattle from the snow—these had been driven back to The Dalles by Morrison and a few others to be wintered there. These men and boys had a rough time of it, and one of them had lost mental control of himself. He was not violent—just listless and helpless, as the man I saw on the rock was

becoming. They had consumed their provisions and were separated from their cattle by a swollen stream and a dense snowstorm. They had a large and fat dog, and hunger suggested his sacrifice. His owner, a strong, healthy youth of eighteen, who had never felt the pangs of hunger before, cried while hacking the dog's throat with a caseknife. The boy was mending the fire, while one of the older men was telling this, and in a spirit of mischief, which is one of the best ingredients of camp life, I asked "John, was the dog's meat good?" The youth turned up his face, yet smeared with the fat, and said solemnly, "Yes, it was good," in a manner that set us all to laughing. They were waiting for an expected boat, and had not long to wait after we left them.

We plied our boats rapidly, though a few times we were windbound and were now on a very slim larder. We also saw signs of scarcity among the Indians, and heard the death wail often and more often intermit the tiresome tom-tom of the gamblers' drum. The fishing villages at The Dalles, Celilo, and the Des Chutes were gathering points for the gamblers, thieves, and desperadoes of the surrounding tribes, and several robberies occurred between John Day and The Dalles. One Indian was brought bound to The Dalles by one of the last parties to arrive. The question was, what to do with him? Most of the men were for shooting him, but Rev. Alvin Waller said, "No; if that was done Indian custom, by his kin or his tribe, would exact a life for a life unless those that shot him made satisfactory payment to his family or tribe, and Indians were more apt than white men to make revenge a race question. This thief," he said, "would be punished more severely by being whipped than in any other way," and Father Waller's reasoning prevailed. The Indian was flogged and turned loose.

A few of Gilliam's train remained for a time at The

Dalles. Capt. William Shaw, Gilliam's brother-in-law, stopped on account of the sickness of his son, T. C. Shaw. G. W. Bush, one of the most efficient men on road, stayed all winter taking care of the live stock.

We left The Dalles December 26 with the running gear of three wagons in our boat and seventeen persons, young and old, on top of that, leaving also our Indian oarsmen at their home. We reached and passed the cascades in safety, delaying only to transfer our load at the portage and pass the bateau down the rapids by cordeling, in the same manner as in coming up. We met with no unusual difficulty until some distance below the rapids. But on the twenty-ninth, as we entered the narrower gorge of Cape Horn from the east, a storm of wind entered from the west. It was the most awful effect of wind that I have ever seen. It seemed to take solid water from the surface of the river and throw it upward as spray, and lift it still higher as fog and cloud. It came rapidly toward us with a perpendicular face of upward movement, in front of which were a number of eagles circling and driving crosswise and up and down, screaming as in delight at the suddenness and ferocity of the storm gust. We two oarsmen were caught with surprise by the suddenness of the approaching danger to our top-heavy boat, but Clark at the steering oar, having complete control of the course to pursue, decided to land on the north bank rather than on a sand spit near us on the south side. This made it necessary to cross the river in front of the storm. We had scarcely time by a few strokes of the oars to turn the boat, heading up stream, before we received the wind like a blow. It struck on the stern quarter, but careened the craft so as to ship water on the lee side without capsizing it, but much accelerating our speed. The first blow received was the

most violent, and we crossed the river right on the crest of its turmoil. In being carried over, however, we were swallowed up completely from the sight of some Indians in a canoe, who hugged the south shore, and who believed they saw us sink, and so reported to our friends at Linnton.

A Mrs. James McAlister, with her four children, was among those in the bateau. (Her husband was engaged with the care of their property; the family had given Clark a temporary home, and to assist whom was his chief object in being there.) She sat mute under the onset of the storm, with her little ones close to her; she was the first to get out onto the bank, and her children were passed to her. After receiving the hand of the last and youngest she turned her face to Clark and said, "Dan Clark, I have been your good friend; but you have just put my children in great danger, without reason, and I never wish to speak to you again." Her face was bloodless with the intensity of her emotions, and Clark, naturally ruddy, was also as white as he could be.

It is but just to give his reason for his decision to reach the north shore: From this side a trail led to Vancouver, and had we been stormbound long, as a party of 1843 had been on the south shore, some of us could have gone to the fort for relief and not be compelled to boil buffalo hide for soup as they had done. The wind fell and the rain came down, but we succeeded, by breaking up a wood rat's nest of huge size, in starting a good fire. During the night the weather turned colder and a few inches of soft snow covered us at daylight. We rekindled our fire, however, and got a good breakfast. Against the chinook wind we made the Hudson's Bay Company's sawmill. There a "canny Scot" gave us the shelter of roofage and the warmth of his ingle side. He was alone, and so near yuletide he must have been reminded

of his childhood by the chatter and life we brought upon him. At all events, after supper, and hearing of our previous night's experience, he said he had made a "little gairden and had a wheen smal turnip the children might like," then stepped out of the firelight and returned with a pail full of nice white turnips, bidding the party generally to "help yersel's." Mrs. McAlister thanked him, and helped the children all around. There were nine young people from four years to eighteen, two of the oldest being near the latter age. This was a homely treat, but was greatly enjoyed, and not the least by the kindly care taker.

December 29.—On our entering the mouth of the Willamette we found the brig *Chenamus*, John H. Couch, master, riding at anchor. We were hailed from the deck, and asked if we would not come on board and pass the night. The party speaking said his name was Cushing, in charge of the vessel, Captain Couch being gone to Oregon City. We accepted the invitation, and were treated with the best supper the ship's larder could furnish, I think. The officers gave up their sleeping quarters to the women and children. After they had retired, Lieut. William Cushing, who was a nephew of Caleb Cushing, in a quiet gentlemanly way made us talk of our overland journey and the incidents thereof. It was very evident that there was more than idle curiosity behind his questions. His family were interested in the infant commerce of Oregon.

December 30.—We landed our last boat load of our immigration on the west bank of the Willamette at Linnton, which was at that day a village of tents, except the residence of the blacksmith, his shop, and a few small outbuildings. We returned the bateau and its belongings, undamaged, to the generous Doctor McLoughlin; and, returning to Linnton on December 31, assisted in

expressing the joy in our arrival by dancing the old year out and the new one in on the puncheon floor of a new log building finished that day.

Not all, but the most of the immigrants made Linn-ton their stopping place until they could choose the district of permanent location. Captain Morrison went to the mouth of the Columbia to look for a home. Rees went with him to stop and work at Hunt's sawmill, the first of the kind on the lower Columbia, and just then beginning to cut lumber. Regarding my agreement with Captain Morrison as not carried out until his family were housed and his cattle in Western Oregon, I waited till his return from Clatsop Plains, west of Astoria, and on his return with a large chinook canoe, assisted in getting the family down to the farm of Solomon H. Smith, twelve miles west of Astoria. It rained almost incessantly, and sometimes we were windbound on the voyage, in exposed positions, and had to endure the pitiless storms of wind and rain where dry fuel could not be had. For two such days we lay on the west side of Tongue Point, two and a half miles from Astoria, or Fort George, the worst days we experienced during the entire journey. This was about the fifteenth of January, 1845. The family left its residence the sixth of May, 1844; so we were somewhat over eight months from house to house. The oldest daughter had a severe attack of camp fever while passing the Rocky Mountains, as had Mr. Rees in the Platte Valley. But we all arrived safe and well, feeling poorer in our clothing supply than in anything else. The last two hundred miles of the journey was most uncomfortable by its being midwinter and by being made in boat or canoe.

CHAPTER X.

THE CONTRACT COMPLETED; A JOURNEY TO THE DALLES
IN 1845.

I returned to Hunt's mill as an assistant in cutting logs till about the first of March, when Mr. Rees returned from a trip to Clatsop Plains, bringing a rifle and a five-dollar gold piece to be used by either himself or by me to go to The Dalles and bring the live stock down; the route being through the gorge of the Columbia, and the animals to be left on the Washougal bottoms in charge of G. W. Bush. As Mr. Rees did not wish to make the journey, I made myself first mate to an Indian owner, and so captain of a canoe, the Indian going on some errand for Birnie, in charge of the Hudson's Bay post at Fort George.

We reached Fort Vancouver early the third day, under a dense fog, and I inadvertently became witness of what might, in view of subsequent history, have been a matter of significance. I bade my Indian friend good-bye, and started for the business gate of the stockade with the purpose of purchasing a little provisions for my trip and some cheap cotton goods, with which to pay my passage to The Dalles in some Indian canoe I might find going thither. As I advanced towards the gate and away from the river, I heard what I took for rifle shots, and as I reached the gate, the fog lifted so that I saw five or six young officers of the fort examining a pole or post they had been taking pistol practice upon. They seemed surprised to see me, and had been close together conferring, when the business bell began to ring and the gate was opened for the day. The men dispersed to their duties, as I inferred, except David McLoughlin, who came direct to me and asked rather brusquely where I had come from

and what my business was. Being told I had just come up the river from Hunt's mill, and was going to The Dalles to help drive the cattle down from there, he asked in a different tone if I thought the American settlers would support Alderman in jumping his father's claim at Oregon City. I replied that that was the first I had heard on that subject, but Mr. Alderman's reputation was such that few settlers, in my opinion, would care to have anything to do with him, and claim-jumping by any one was an unpopular proceeding. Such was the substance of our talk, and he then bade me good morning. It was five months afterwards before I learned the immediate cause of that pistol practice, though I heard much condemnation of Alderman's attempt to jump Doctor McLoughlin's Oregon City claim. This, moreover, was the first time my opinion on a public question was asked and given. I then went to the store, or shop, as most of the employees called it, and got my twenty pounds of flour and six pounds of salt pork (the company made no bacon); a gallon bucket of block tin, with a lid, and a pint cup; also six highly colored coarse cotton handkerchiefs. Upon asking if there were any Dalles Indians at the post, I was told that there had been some from above The Dalles, but my informant believed they had gone. He said there were some Americans camped above, who had just come from The Dalles, and they would be most likely to know.

Taking my outfit along, I went in search of the Americans, and found them to be my friend Dan Clark and some others with cattle of parties of Gilliam's train, who had settled on Tualatin Plains. They had heard of some Indians from above, but could give no definite information. I was standing towards the edge of the river bank from their fire looking at the water, when a canoe came in sight close in shore. I immediately hailed and the paddles stopped. I explained that I wished to go to The

Dalles and would give four pieces of *chum sail* (colored cloth) for a place in their canoe, and would help paddle. They hesitated a few seconds, then went on without speaking. This was odd conduct, and I was yet studying upon it when another smaller canoe, with three persons in it, came in sight, headed the same way. I now repeated my proposition, holding up the bright colored goods. They turned their canoe to the shore immediately, and I was thus on my way without loss of time. We soon overhauled the other party, and then both canoes put to shore, and one of the men in the canoe which had accommodated me got into the other and much larger canoe, which now contained four men and a young woman, who was handsome rather than good looking. There were now in our canoe a middle aged, strongly built man, his wife, of much the same description, and two children of two and four, perhaps. No one of either party had yet spoken to me. We then pulled on up to the gristmill, six miles above Vancouver, landed, and in a short time the entire party of Indians, without stopping to eat, were under blankets and sound asleep.

I was somewhat mystified by this conduct, and did not at the time think of nights and days, perhaps, spent in gambling. I occupied myself preparing my dinner. As this is simply an account of the manner in which we managed the details of travel in the early pioneer life, for which I have inserted this minute description of the canoeing, I will also describe getting my noonday meal. First, a fire was kindled; next, my bright new gallon bucket, half full of water, was hung over the blaze. Then a few slices of fat pork, cut thin with my pocket knife, were added. While the pot was coming to the boiling point I made me a rough wooden spoon, and getting a little water in my tin cup, poured some of it care-

fully into a cavity made in the middle of my little sack of flour, as this stood open. All the skill required at this point was to wet no more flour than I needed at one meal. The thin slices of meat were soon cooked, and into the boiling kettle I dropped from the wooden spoon the batter I had made. It did not take long to thus get a dinner of soup and drop dumplings, and I have since been served with restaurant soup not nearly so good as that. Moreover, mine was very simply prepared, and no dishes to wash afterwards. If I suffered from lack of variety I have no remembrance of it.

Towards evening the Indians woke up, and I became satisfied there was a cause for the conduct of the chief and his henchman, the married man in whose canoe I had a seat. Neither the chief in the large canoe or the women seemed to know I was there; but with the three men who, under the present arrangement, manned the large canoe it was different. They not only noticed me, but began to find opportunities to speak with me. As they did so I learned that the chief was the big chief of the Walla Walla; the young woman who was for the time companion of the chief was unmarried, and the tallest of the three young men was her brother, and a medicine man. The other two were slaves of the chief. One of these was a well formed man of average size, and the other a small, alert, active man, whom I heard the chief reprove for noticing me.

I was utterly at a loss at the time to account for this behavior, and, under a feeling of restraint, met it in kind as far as I could. An idea occurred to me, however, and later information confirmed me in its belief. The chief had been to Vancouver to solicit the counsel of Doctor McLoughlin on something connected with the white race and was returning disappointed. From before this date until after 1855 there was but one Walla Walla chief

known to the whites—a silent, crafty, remorseless man, Peu-peu-mox-mox, or Yellow Serpent. At this very date subsequent history shows this chief just returned from California, where he had failed in a business venture, and also in getting satisfaction or revenge for the death of his son Elijah, killed by an American over property stolen from the latter by local Indians and by the Walla Walla from the latter. During the five days I was with the party the chief rarely spoke, even to the young woman who sat beside him and evidently tried to engage his attention. His silence seemed to me yet more of sullen disappointment than of natural dignity. Only once did he show a different mood. Then his men turned the canoe from the north shore, which we were hugging, in chase of two men in a single canoe making from mid-stream to the south shore with all their might. We followed, all the Indians under excitement. My curiosity was greatly aroused to know what it meant. We landed by the canoe we had been chasing, and went into the lodge that had been so located as to make it extremely dangerous to invade it, so surrounded was it with rocks forming a cover for defenders. The manner of the inmates was very quiet; that of our chief as he went in was that of a friendly visitor. He spoke low, and was answered in the same manner. After a few minutes, during which but few words were said, one of the two men in the lodge brought out a small sturgeon and presented it to our big chief, who, by a nod, guided it to our little slave warrior, and we then ceremoniously left the family of chinook sturgeon fishers with this peace offering of one little sturgeon of twenty-five or thirty pounds. It was as if the large elk wolf, which the chief in some way resembled, had taken to mouse hunting.

A MOUNTAIN MIRRORED.

We were again quietly paddling up the north shore of this grand river, the sunlight striking the opposite side, but not yet reaching the still surface of the stream. The chief's canoe stopped and ours moved up alongside, and our leading man and myself, without a word spoken, got into the larger canoe, and the little brave with his gun got into ours in front, and the larger man behind ; and thus rearranged they started across the river. I was mystified by these movements. The two women near me kept up a low conversation, looking constantly meanwhile into the water. They landed soon at the south shore, the river here being but little over half a mile wide, and the little brave going ashore started straight up the face of the mountain, which appeared perpendicular, but evidently was not, as brushwood and some small trees covered three fourths of it, the balance being rock, colored with mosses and lichens. The surface of the river showed this in all its hues, but with inverse lines, just as plainly as the best mirror, and this had been forced on my attention by looking repeatedly at the river surface as the two women near me continued to do. Ah ! at last I see the hunter. He is now nearly half the distance from the canoe to the mountain top. I follow with my sight the direction in which he is climbing, and see there a large black bear quietly feeding on something. The hunter is moving cautiously, and now we see him stop and aim, and the smoke of the gun and the disappearance of the bear are all observed before the report reaches us. The shot was unsuccessful, as, under my observation, all Indian shooting has been so far. The hunter in this case, still seen in the reflection, hesitated a little, perhaps watching the bear, which we could not

see, then turned and made his way to the canoe, and we thereupon resumed our journey.

We arrived at the foot of the long portage of the cascades, chilled by a cold chinook wind, late in the evening. We passed a cheerless night under the roof of a building of logs which had not been chinked. In getting our canoes up this three and a half miles of shore—as we had to cordel to the still water above the cascades—there was much danger, both to the men who must climb from rock to rock along the shore, and to the cedar canoes, which were in constant danger of striking the rocks in the stream. I was, I believe, the most efficient man of the lot, and received the compliment of undisguised admiration of the three young men more than once. The whole party was traveling light, counsel rather than commerce, I judge, being the object of the chief's trip. The henchman and the women had completed carrying the goods before we succeeded in getting the canoes up.

We were not visited by other Indians during the five days I was with the party. We left the upper portage early, and no wind. Taking the south shore we came opposite Wind Mountain, when the chief's canoe stopped again. The young medicine man alone got out, taking no arms. Out of curiosity I followed him up the bank and onto the flat surface of a large coffin-shaped rock. Near the center of this the Indian placed himself, facing west, his feet wide apart, and taking up a flat stone there, evidently for the purpose, he drew it as far as he could reach from west to east along the rock and between his feet, making a noise like a rushing wind, to bring which was plainly his purpose. Taking to the canoes again we soon had indications of the chinook wind. This freshened as the day advanced, and by 2 o'clock P. M. the surface of the river was well covered with whitecaps.

There is a point of rock making out from the north shore near Memaloose Island. We landed at this and the wife and children got out. The medicine man got in, and with the henchman in the bow and me with the steering paddle, we started to pass the point. It was chopped water, but the wind and rocks made the danger. Three Chinook squaws would never have hesitated to pass that point sailing, but this young man who had raised the wind, or thought he had, actually became paralyzed with fear. He ceased effort when his strength was most needed, and did not recover himself until we rounded the point and landed. His action would have drawn upon him the derision of any party of white men, but I saw no sign of that among these natives. We had the fire kindled and matters under way for a late dinner before the mother and her children came to us. She had evidently taken off some of her garments to shield her children from the thicket of young nettles already two feet high, and her legs to her knees and hands and arms to the elbows were red with nettle stings. With smiles, which yet indicated the pain she was suffering, she related in a low voice her experience in reaching us; and such was her general conduct as wife and mother the few days I was in their company.

I was put ashore at length at the camp fire of some boys who were to be my associates in the cattle drive, now on the south side of the river near The Dalles, and I parted with the servitors of the great chief of the Walla Walla without his apparent notice, and without hearing his voice, except in a low growl at his lively little warrior hunter for his notice of me.

I found Mr. Bush and others collecting the cattle we had to drive, and the second morning thereafter we started our herds. There were some eighty head of cattle, and about twenty head of horses in a separate

drove, following. The Rev. Mr. Waller sent with us one of his converts of his mission, a tall, sedate man, by whose assistance we got our stock safely across to the north side of the Columbia, making them swim from a large rock projecting from the south shore about two and a half miles west of Hood River. The cattle had had training in swimming the streams the previous year, and crossed without loss. We hired a large canoe of the local Indians, and with it took a few of the most valuable horses alongside the canoe, urging the others to follow free. This was successfully done, except that a fine high-bred mare of H. A. G. Lee died of fright in midstream. I held her by the head all the way across, and know that her nostrils never were in the water,—but she was dead ere we got to shore. The Indians said it was fright caused the death, and this was not unusual; “horses were not so brave in water as cattle.” They had the carcass out on the sand, skinned, and divided in a very short time.

We made an excellent day’s drive after crossing, and the evening exercises are yet well remembered. One of our party was a German watchmaker, and, moreover, a scholar, who had translated “The Spy,” by J. Fennimore Cooper, into German before coming to the United States. Among the songs he contributed to our evening’s pleasure was the rollicking little bacchanalian sergent’s song from the novel, and some German songs of like character from the German rendered into English.

We had no trouble in our drive, making the distance from The Dalles to Washougal in four days of travel, including crossing the Columbia; but were hindered in our attempt to cross for two days by high wind. Leaving the cattle in Mr. Bush’s charge as ordered, I made my way to Clatsop Plains, and reported what I had done to Captain Morrison; and considering I had fulfilled my

verbal agreement made just about one year before, returned to Hunt's mill and worked there until about the middle of June, when, with others, I came to Oregon City to cast my first vote as a citizen of Oregon under the Provisional Government; my ballot being cast for George Abernethy, first Governor of Oregon.

JOHN MINTO.